

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 057167

71

ORIGIN EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-11 NIC-01 ACDA-19 IO-14 CIAE-00

PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 DODE-00 H-03 NSC-07 SS-20

USIE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 /141 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/RPM:JHKING:DG

APPROVED BY EUR:AAHARTMAN

EUR/RPM:EJSTREATOR

INR/EE:IMATUSEK

EUR/EE:HGILMORE:WSHEPARD:EHURWITZ

EUR/CE:WSWING

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O 212247Z MAR 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE

INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 057167

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, HU, YO, UR, GW

SUBJECT: SOVIET INTENTIONS TOWARD YUGOSLAVIA: FRG CONCERN

1. DURING A MEETING WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN MARCH 20 IN THE DEPARTMENT, FRG AMBASSADOR VON STADEN REFERRED TO REPORTS PUBLISHED RECENTLY IN TWO GERMAN NEWSPAPERS (DIE WELT OF MAR 18 AND THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG OF MARCH 19) THAT THE SOVIETS WERE MANEUVERING TROOPS IN HUNGARY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THE FRG WONDERED WHETHER THIS MIGHT RELATE TO TENTATIVE SOVIET PLANS TO INTERVENE IN YUGOSLAVIA WHENEVER TITO SHOULD LEAVE THE POLITICAL SCENE. VON STADEN REQUESTED

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 057167

AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH THE US ON THIS POSSIBILITY,

AND ASKED THAT THE SECRETARY BE MADE AWARE OF THE FRG'S CONCERN. THE FRG WILL ALSO RAISE THIS ISSUE WITH THE NATO AMBASSADORS IN BRUSSELS UNOFFICIALLY, PERHAPS AT A PERMREP LUNCHEON. VON STADEN WAS TOLD THAT WE WERE UNAWARE OF ANY THREATENING DEVELOPMENTS, BUT WOULD BE BACK IN TOUCH AFTER LOOKING INTO MATTER.

2. WE ARE PROVIDING TO FRG EMBASSY FOLLOWING INFO, WHICH ADDRESSEES MAY DRAW ON AS APPROPRIATE: VON STADEN MAY BE REFERRING TO REPORTS OF A RUMOR EMANATING ORIGINALLY FROM THE CHINESE ATTACHE IN BELGRADE THAT THE SOVIETS ARE MOVING TROOPS INTO HUNGARY BECAUSE TITO IS SICK. THERE IS NO VERIFICATION OF THIS RUMOR, AND THE

YUGOSLAV ARMY IS NOT ON ALERT NOR HAS IT TAKEN ANY PRECAUTIONS WHICH WOULD LEND CREDENCE TO THE RUMOR. ROUTINE HUNGARIAN MANEUVERS, POSSIBLY INVOLVING SOVIET TROOPS, WERE HELD FROM 3-9 MARCH NEAR THE YUGOSLAV BORDER. FURTHER, THE HUNGARIAN DEFENSE MINISTER VISITED BELGRADE FROM 11-15 MARCH TO ARRANGE FOR TITO'S VISIT TO HUNGARY EARLY NEXT MONTH. TITO, WHO WILL BE 82 IN MAY, RETURNED TO NORMAL ACTIVITY MARCH 18 AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS OF REST AT HIS HUNTING LODGE NEAR BELGRADE. ALTHOUGH RECENT REPORTS INDICATE TITO IS HEARTY AND MENTALLY ALERT, HE SUFFERS FROM SOME OF THE INFIRMITIES ASSOCIATED WITH ADVANCED AGE.

4. BEGIN FYI: THERE APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN SOME DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA OF SOVIET-HUNGARIAN MILITARY COOPERATION IN RECENT WEEKS. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, AT THIS TIME TO DETERMINE WHETHER THESE DEVELOPMENTS RELATE ONLY TO SOVIET-HUNGARIAN MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS OR HAVE BROADER IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WARSAW PACT AS A WHOLE. END FYI.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, NEWSPAPERS, MILITARY EXERCISES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE057167
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JHKING:DG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740060-0559
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740324/aaaaaxao.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 MAR 2002 by collinp0>; APPROVED <04 JUN 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET INTENTIONS TOWARD YUGOSLAVIA: FRG CONCERN
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, HU, YO, UR, GE, (HARTMAN), (VON STADEN)
To: NATO BRUSSELS
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005